

and steers a perfect diagonal
across the intersection
to smash broadside into a late-model sports car.

as the crunch echoes through the neighborhood,
i hurry to my car,
prepared to make haste out of there,
but now i get to thinking
that the sonofabitch may be bleeding to death
or one or both of the cars
about to explode into flames,
so i drive around the block
to survey the damage.

my man is now sitting immobile
in the middle of another intersection.
the side of the sports car is caved in.
lights are beginning to go on in the stucco manses.

i ask myself what advice
my friend sergeant roger hotspur would have for me,
and i get the fuck out of there.

-- Gerald Locklin

Long Beach CA

THE LUCKY ONES

stuck in the rain on the freeway, 6:15 p.m., stop, then
first gear, then stop, these are the lucky ones, these
are the employed, most with their radios on while lighting
cigarettes, trying not to think.

this is a large portion of our civilization and as beings
once lived in trees and caves now they very often live
inside of automobiles upon freeways

as the world news is heard over and over, the popular
songs, the rock songs, the love songs, all the songs,
love songs, love love love as
we shift from first gear to neutral and back to first.

there's a poor fellow stalled in the fast lane, hood up,
he's standing up against the freeway fence
a newspaper over his head in the rain

the other cars force around his car, pull into the next
lane against cars determined to shut them off.

in the lane to my right a driver is being followed by a police car with red and blue lights blinking -- this one can't be a speeding ticket as

suddenly the rain comes down in a giant wash and all the cars stop and

even with the windows up I can smell somebody's clutch burning out

hope it's not mine as

the wall of water diminishes and we go back to first gear as we are a long way from Johnny Carson's monologue tonight

we are a long way away from anything as I have memorized the shape of the car in front of me and the shape of the driver's head

what

I can see of it from above the headrest of his seat and his license number: STK 405 and his bumper sticker: HAVE YOU HUGGED YOUR RAT TODAY?

suddenly I have the urge to urinate while 17 miles from where I live as another wall of water comes down and the man on the radio announces that there will be a 70 percent chance of showers tomorrow night.

THIS IS FREE, TAKE IT, AND FEEL BETTER

bad-natured people are everywhere like flies upon a dead horse in a hot summer

they are set upon objects, things, situations

in a rather congenial viciousness

that is most often mistaken for courage

but generally

(setting aside bad companionship, bad diet, bad breeding) most acrimonious nerves

(setting aside bad elimination of wastes and so forth) are caused by

failure.

and they fail

first

because they are simply incompetent at what they try to do or be

and second

because of an educational system

and a

national philosophy which

beckons them higher than they are able.